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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 001070

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SUBJECT: RUSSIA AND MOZAMBIQUE: STILL COMRADES?

1. (C) SUMMARY: With a long history of cooperation during the Soviet era, Russia maintains a nominal official presence in Mozambique, with an eye towards natural resource exploration and garnering support for its international policies. The bilateral trade imbalance leans in Mozambique's favor, and Russia focuses its aid efforts on providing training in Russia to a small number of Mozambicans and supporting a few health programs. Some members of the Government of Mozambique (GRM) and the ruling FRELIMO party remain sympathetic to Russia, and even speak favorably of the re-emergence of Russia's political and military strength as a counterbalance to Western powers. Younger generations, particularly in Maputo, appear to have little affinity towards Russia or allegiance to Mozambique's former ally.
END SUMMARY.

HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP

2. (C) Econoff met recently with third secretary Mikhail Bronnikov from the Russian Embassy in Maputo to discuss Russia's presence in Mozambique. The official expressed interest in additional information on U.S. foreign assistance projects, but had little to report on their bilateral relationship. The Soviets provided significant military training and equipment during Mozambique's civil war, which ended in 1992. Ideologically, the Soviet Union shaped Mozambique's socialist agenda during the liberation struggle and the early years of independence, though the GRM abandoned socialism in practice in the mid-1980's. While the GRM leadership moved towards open market and democratic ideologies, vestiges of the Soviet influence remain in some laws, regulations, and rhetoric. Despite Mozambique's negative experiences with Soviet-inspired Marxist-Leninist ideologies, some older GRM officials from the ruling FRELIMO party speak favorably of the re-emergence of Russia's political and military strength, claiming that Russia acts as a counterbalance to Western powers, whom they still view with some skepticism despite large donor and FDI inflows. Although in the past the GRM viewed the Soviet state as its natural ally, most Mozambicans have negative memories of food shortages and rationing under the planned economy system, while others consider the Soviets to be racist, faulting them for rarely mingling with Mozambicans and maintaining segregated lifestyles while working on projects here.

RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

3. (S/NF) Bronnikov told Econoff that Russia's mission in Mozambique is small and limited, focusing on multi-lateral cooperation, as well as technical training in the areas of military science, geology, history, and physics. He indicated that Russia is interested in mining precious stones and minerals, though no Russian mining companies are known to

be operational in Mozambique. Bronnikov spoke of a 2008 mission of Russian energy analysts to Mozambique, although he did not disclose the specific purpose of the mission. (Note: The Russian mission in Maputo only has seven officially accredited diplomats, yet the physical footprint of the embassy and the number of Russians that appear to hold professional-level positions there would suggest a much larger contingent. A sizeable intelligence component is presumed. End note.)

PERSPECTIVES ON GEORGIA

14. (C) On multilateral issues, Russia may be trying to gain the GRM's support in the international arena. Photographs of the conflict in Georgia displayed at the entrance of the Russian Embassy are accompanied by language accusing the Georgians of perpetrating violence and encouraging civil unrest in the region. At the height of the conflict, Russian Ambassador Igor V. Popov made a rare public appearance, speaking at length about the tense relations between Georgia and Russia at the School of International Studies in Maputo, and recently gave the entire diplomatic community a non-paper stating Russia's perspectives. The GRM has not made any public statements on the conflict in Georgia.

RUSSIAN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN MOZAMBIQUE

15. (C) Bronnikov told Econoff that trade between Mozambique

MAPUTO 00001070 002 OF 002

and Russia remains limited. Export/import data exhibit wide variations. According to the GRM, Mozambique exports \$5.05 million to Russia while importing \$1.2 million. Data from the UN comtrade database states the trade relationship as much higher with Mozambique exporting some \$31.4 million to Russia, with imports at \$11.3 million. The IMF puts Mozambique's 2007 fob exports to Russia at \$16.5 million, and imports from Russia at \$4.9 million. In spite of the variations, the data do seem to indicate there is a trade imbalance in favor of Mozambique. According to the Mozambican Center for the Promotion of Investment (CPI), there has been no direct Russian investment in Mozambique since 2004. In March however, the Russian-Dutch joint venture Salym Petroleum Development (SPD-a joint venture set up in 1996 between Russia's Evikhon and Shell Oil) announced that it will drill two offshore exploration wells in Sofala Bay with the option of an additional four wells on behalf of partner and concession-holder SASOL of South Africa.

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RUSSO-U.S. COOPERATION IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION?
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16. (C) Bronnikov raised the possibility of U.S.-Russian cooperation in Mozambique, particularly in the areas of health and education. According to Bronnikov, Russia donates \$8.62 million to the World Bank and World Health Organization to combat malaria in Mozambique and provides 25 scholarships, three of which are for post-graduate work in Russian institutions. The Russian Ambassador recently expressed similar interest to the Charge, especially inquiring about malaria programs, and a courtesy call to touch on this issue is planned for late November.

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COMMENT: RUSSIAN INFLUENCE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED
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17. (C) While overt Russian influence in Mozambique appears to be at a near-historic low, Russia seems more focused on Mozambique's support in multilateral forums. However, in such situations, voting patterns indicate that Mozambique is

much more likely to side with influential neighbor South Africa than Russia. Fondness for Russia and a certain level of skepticism towards the West will likely continue so long as Mozambique's old guard remains in power. The younger generations of Mozambicans, however, have little affinity towards Russia or allegiance to Mozambique's former ally. Even so, undoing the ideological impact of the Soviet experience, particularly in the areas of land and labor regulation reform, will continue to be a slow process.

Chapman